

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

OFFICE OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FLM 5-47

April 7, 1947

* WORLD CATTLE NUMBERS IN 1946 AND 1947

World cattle numbers at the beginning of 1947 were estimated at about 716 million head, an increase of 3.5 million over a year earlier. Present numbers are more than 6 million head or about 1 percent above the 1931-40 average. Decreases which were reported in all the North American countries, Australia, and the Soviet Union were more than offset by increases in Asia, Europe, South America, and Africa.

Many of the war-devastated and drought-stricken countries in 1946 made a moderate recovery in cattle numbers because of a more favorable feed situation and increased breedings during the last year and a half. In other countries, particularly where decreases occurred, uncertainty of cattle prices, inadequate domestic or imported feed supplies, and the need for expanding food-grain production for human consumption in lieu of feed grains materially affected farmers' plans to increase breedings and generally retarded cattle raising.

CATTLE: Estimated world numbers, by continents,
averages 1931-35 and 1936-40, annual 1944-46

Continent or area	Average : 1931-35 : 1936-40 :	1944	: 1945	: 1946 a/
	:Thousands:Thousands:	Thousands:	Thousands	Thousands
North America	95,900 : 96,600	116,500	117,000	113,200
Europe	107,100 : 110,200	101,400	99,100	96,300
Soviet Union	36,900 : 48,500	35,000	37,800	41,500
Asia	272,400 : 283,400	267,700	262,600	264,100
South America	104,900 : 105,600	109,000	110,400	111,200
Africa	60,500 : 61,400	67,600	68,000	67,100
Oceania	17,500 : 18,100	19,100	19,200	19,000
Total	695,200 : 723,800	716,300	714,100	712,400

a/ Preliminary.

Present cattle numbers in North and South America, Africa, and Oceania are, for the most part, considerably above the 1931-40 average, largely as a result of greater demand for beef and dairy products and a favorable price relationship between cattle and feed during the wartime period. This position is still being maintained because of the large demand on the part of the United Kingdom and other importing countries as well as in many of the producing countries.

In Europe, Asia, and the Soviet Union, cattle numbers are considerably below prewar levels because of wartime losses, droughts and for other reasons. It is in this group of countries, however, that the greatest increase in cattle numbers can be looked for in the next several years. Restoration of cattle numbers in these countries is dependent on economic and political situations prevailing within the countries, the availability of domestic and import feeds, and sufficiency of breeding stock.

In continental Europe, particularly in France, Belgium, Germany, and the Balkan countries, currency depreciation is a factor of some significance to the cattle industry. Farmers recall that currency after World War I in many instances was more or less valueless and they are now reluctant to dispose of cattle for greatly reduced currency. As a result, farmers desire to hold cattle as an investment in preference to selling them and accumulating currency of low value.

At the beginning of 1947, cattle numbers on farms in the United States were estimated at 81 million head, a decline of 1.4 million or approximately 2 percent from a year earlier and 5 percent below the all-time high of (85.6 million) January 1, 1945. Most of the decrease in numbers occurred in steers, dairy heifers, and milk cows. On the other hand, the number of heifer calves saved for milk cows increased, while beef heifers and beef cows continued at a high level. The cattle and feed-grain relationship in 1947 is more favorable than last year because feed-grain supplies on farms January 1 were 10 percent higher and cattle on farms as of the same date were 2 percent lower than in 1946.

In Canada, cattle numbers on farms, according to the December 1, 1946, survey, totaled 9.7 million head, compared with slightly more than 9.9 million on December 1, 1945. This was a reduction of slightly more than 2 percent from a year earlier, continuing the downward trend started in 1945. Milk cows showed a decline from the previous year, principally because a considerable number of low producers had been culled out. Of the total, 3.9 million were milk cows. The marketing of low-grade cattle is being emphasized in order to reduce cattle numbers. Numbers at the present time are about 2-1/2 million head higher than prewar. There is some concern about market outlet after Canadian-United Kingdom agreement expires.

Cuban cattle numbers in 1946 continued the downward trend started in 1942. Present numbers are estimated to be 5 percent below the 1945 census figure of 4 million head. Strong domestic demand for beef and high prices have induced cattle owners to reduce herd numbers without very much attention being given to maintenance or expansion of herds. The condition and weight of Cuban cattle are the best in several years because of unusually good pastures. As a result, marketings in 1946 were heavier than in 1945.

Until last fall, cattle numbers in Mexico were believed to have been maintained near the 1944 level of 12 million head. The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, during the latter part of December 1946, however, can be expected to reduce numbers in 1947 and to affect cattle numbers for several years. The United States is actively collaborating with Mexico in the control and eradication of the disease.

Despite shortage and rationing of feed, cattle numbers in the United Kingdom, as of last June, totaled approximately 9.6 million head, or 36,000 head more than a year previous. Numbers increased primarily because of the emphasis placed upon milk production for fluid consumption. Livestock data indicate that cows and heifers constitute about 46 percent of the total cattle numbers. During June 1945 to June 1946, however, dairy heifers with calf for the first time showed an increase of 86,000 head over the previous

June, while other cattle 2 years or older and those under 2 years showed a large decrease. Slaughter of cattle in August, September, and October was abnormally large because of reduced feed supplies. At the present time, feed imports for the first few months of 1947 are below a year ago.

Cattle numbers in Eire for June 1946 are estimated at 4.1 million head, compared with 4.2 million in 1945, and were well above the average. This year's decline apparently occurred in the one-year-old class, owing to slaughtering of calves. During the first 9 months of 1946, nearly 300,000 head of live cattle were exported to the United Kingdom.

In Denmark cattle numbers as of December 1945 had almost reached the 1931-40 average, but uncertain market prospects, labor difficulties, and inadequate protein feed led to some decline in numbers by the end of 1946. The number of cows and heifers showed little change during the year, the decline being confined mostly to yearling heifers and calves under 1 year. Dairy cows and heifers represent about two-thirds of the total cattle population.

Cattle numbers in Norway June 1946 showed a small decrease from the preceding year. Milk-cow numbers constitute about 55 percent of the total. A heavy movement of cattle during the slaughter season was due to price regulations and shortage of feed. Restoration of cattle numbers to the 1938 level of about 1.4 million head is expected during the next 2 years. Any increase, however, is dependent on the importation of feed grains and protein concentrates. Despite the fact that a shortage of feed exists and feed rationing continues, cattle numbers in Sweden increased slightly in 1946. Some increase occurred in cow and young cattle numbers during the year. It is also reported that cow numbers are expected to rise and to reach prewar level in 1947.

Notwithstanding shortage and rationing of feed supplies, cattle numbers in Belgium during 1946 increased more than 100,000 head over the preceding year and are now almost 94 percent of the 1931-40 average. All classes of cattle, except oxen and cows, are reported to have increased during the year. Cattle numbers in the Netherlands, according to the 1946 May census, showed an increase of about 133,000 head over a year earlier, but are still about 12 percent below the 1931-40 average. Because of the possibility of an unfavorable winter feed position, less desirable young cattle and old cows were slaughtered during the latter part of 1946. Dairy cows and young cattle are 81 and 92 percent, respectively, of prewar.

A vastly improved forage and pasture situation in France during 1946 brought cattle numbers to almost 15.1 million head, or only about half a million head below 1938. As a result of concentrated effort to restore and rehabilitate the livestock industry, cattle numbers are now nearly up to prewar, although proportionately high in young stock not in full production. Concentrated protein feeds, however, are in short supply, and in keeping with prewar practices, imports will be needed for the optimum production.

Cattle numbers in Switzerland, according to the census of April 1946, showed a small increase over 1945, but were still 11 percent below the 1931-40

CATTLE: Numbers in specified countries
averages 1931-1935 and 1936-40, annual 1942-1947

Continent and Country	Month of estimate	Average		1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
		Thousands	Thousands						
North America									
United States £/....	Jan. 1	68,465	66,706	76,025	81,204	85,334	85,573	82,434	81,050
Canada	Dec. 1	8,250	8,246	8,249	8,834	9,506	10,258	9,961	9,747
Mexico	June	10,083	11,722			12,000			
Guatemala	July	409	520	630	729	657			
Honduras	July	611	524	645		500			
El Salvador	July	520	680	743	673	779			
Nicaragua	July	800	700			800			
Cuba	Dec. 31	4,340	5,024		4,897	4,500	4,000		3,800
Estimated total ...		95,900	96,600			116,500	117,000	113,200	
Europe									
United Kingdom	June	8,462	8,798			9,501	9,616	9,652	
Eire (Ireland)	June	4,059	4,021	9,075	9,259	4,246	4,211	4,139	
Norway	June	1,323	1,390	4,084	4,136	1,280	1,270	1,267	
Sweden	Summer	3,025	2,959	1,280	1,250	2,859	2,843	2,900	1,270
Denmark	Dec. 31	2,997	3,108	2,546	2,790	2,933	3,036	3,041	2,954
Netherlands	May	2,734	2,693	2,441	2,058	2,190	2,277	2,410	
Belgium	Jan. 1	1,793	1,724	1,759	1,407	1,392	1,440	1,539	1,652
Luxembourg	Dec. 1	101	108		121	129	105	109	
France	Fall	15,616	15,504	15,991	16,282	14,997	13,960	14,273	15,129
Spain	Dec. 31	4,011	3,739	3,900	4,152	4,173	4,100	3,808	
Portugal	Dec. 31	905	905	960	1,040	1,020	1,000	950	
Switzerland	April	1,636	1,663	1,493	1,517	1,497	1,461	1,472	
Italy	July	7,090	7,571	8,372			6,550	6,900	
Germany	Dec. 1	19,134	19,882	19,432	19,102	19,598	20,286		
Austria	Dec. 3	2,349	2,578			2,530	2,536	2,187	2,206
Czechoslovakia £/....	Dec. 31	4,392	4,820	4,800	4,600	4,600	4,400	4,300	4,650
Poland	June 30	9,450	9,965						
Hungary £/.....	Spring	1,759	1,905	2,376	2,338	2,167	1,070	1,100	
Yugoslavia £/.....	Dec. 31	3,911	4,181						
Greece £/.....	Dec. 31	937	1,041						
Albania £/.....	Dec. 31	393	413			480	550	625	656
Bulgaria £/.....	Dec. 31	1,873	1,822	1,991	2,112	1,785	1,673	1,640	1,680
Rumania £/.....	Dec. 31	4,325	4,399						
Lithuania	Dec. 31	1,109	1,188	940					
Latvia	June	1,172	1,234	1,100	1,000				
Estonia	June	689	673	466		461			
Finland	Mar. 1	1,792	1,893	1,541	1,721	1,867	1,694	1,673	1,670
Estimated total ...		107,100	110,200			101,400	99,100	96,300	
Soviet Union									
	Jan. 1	36,900	48,500			35,000	37,800	41,500	41,400

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Prepared or estimated from official statistics, United States foreign service reports, and other information. Data relate to prewar boundaries, unless otherwise noted. Totals include estimates for countries for which official statistics are unavailable.

a/ End of year estimates (October to December) included under following year for comparisons and totals. Thus for Canada the December 1, 1941 estimate of 3,249,000 is shown under 1942. b/ Preliminary. c/ Estimates for 1940-1946 revised, based on the 1945 Census of Agriculture. d/ Average for 2 to 4 years only. e/ Census or estimate for single year. f/ Unofficial estimate. g/ Official statistics plus an allowance for Alsace-Lorraine. h/ Census, December 31, 1934. i/ March. j/ Data include buffaloes. k/ Includes Southern Dobruja. l/ September. m/ Data include only number taxed. n/ Includes China Proper (22 provinces), Manchuria, Jehol, and Sinkiang (Turkestan). o/ Census, January 1 1939. p/ Includes estimates for Outer Mongolia. q/ June.

average. Milk cow numbers increased because of a slightly improved position in the importation of feedstuffs in 1945. In 1946, limited imports and low domestic yields led to restricted feeding over the greater part of the year, but as feed imports increased rationing was abolished. Available feeds were being utilized mainly for milk production and building up of herds rather than for production of beef and veal.

In Spain, cattle numbers are reported to have declined about 8 percent from the 1945 level and are now about 90 percent of the pre-Civil War level. Although pasture lands were improved in 1946 and feed grains were more plentiful, the available feed did not meet the requirements of the reduced cattle numbers. Aside from cattle-feed requirements, large quantities of feed were required for a considerable number of work animals. Barring adverse conditions, some observers anticipate that cattle will reach their normal level in 1948. Cattle numbers in Portugal appear to have been reduced about 10 to 20 percent from the 1940 level because of serious losses which occurred, owing to a series of drought years.

Cattle numbers in Germany for the prewar area at the beginning of 1946 were estimated at about 80 percent of the 1931-40 average. It is indicated that preliminary 1946-47 plans call for a reduction of cattle numbers in the United States zone, maintenance of present levels in the British area and increases in the French and Soviet zones. These adjustments, for the most part, are believed to take into account the relationship of cattle numbers to available feed, fodder crops, and grassland area, in line with the necessity for production of food crops for human consumption.

Poland appears to have made considerable recovery in cattle numbers during 1946. It has been indicated that cattle numbers are now more than three-fourths of prewar. Of this number, milk cows probably make up nearly half. Slaughter rates for cattle were reduced by Government regulation as a measure taken to rebuild herds. Cattle numbers in the acquired areas are believed to be only about half of prewar numbers.

Czechoslovakian cattle numbers January 1, 1947, were estimated to be about 4.6 million head, but somewhat below the record high number of 1938. Official Czechoslovakian policy has been directed toward rapid restoration of livestock numbers and prices offered encouraged an increase in cattle numbers. The recovery in cattle numbers from moderate wartime losses, was also accelerated by prohibition of the slaughter of calves and young animals. While a general shortage of feed existed because of greatly reduced imports of feed grains and oil cakes, large quantities of domestic cereals are being fed. The cattle trend is expected to continue upward in 1947.

In Hungary, cattle numbers have shown a slight upward trend since 1945 and are now believed to be about 60 percent of the 1931-40 average. It is reported that little progress can be expected in rebuilding cattle numbers as long as there exists unrest, fear among farmers of unofficial requisitioning, redistribution of herds due to land reform and limited breeding stock. More normal conditions appear to be necessary before the prewar level can be attained.

Further reduction in cattle numbers occurred in Rumania during 1946, when lack of feed and water in the eastern one-third of that country resulted in heavy cattle losses. Slaughter houses were prohibited from selling good cuts of meat to the local population for consumption. In view of the drought and heavy reparations, various Government measures have been taken to maintain breeding herds and work animals in the drought area. The recovery of cattle numbers does not appear very encouraging.

In Yugoslavia, cattle numbers, as of March 1946, were estimated to be about 22 percent below 1939. Heifers and cows over 2 years old showed the smallest reduction. Numbers during the year, however, were believed to have risen because of increased breedings, UNRRA shipments, Government restrictions on the slaughter of female animals, and other regulations.

Cattle numbers in Austria are now about 89 percent of the 1931-40 average. But, in view of the shortage of feed and great need for bread grains for human consumption, some downward adjustment in cattle numbers appears necessary in the United States zone.

Despite a short feed and forage situation, estimated at less than one-third of the 1933-37 supply, cattle numbers in Bulgaria during 1946 increased 3 percent over 1945, but are still about 4 percent below prewar. Greece, likewise, shows a small increase in cattle numbers for 1946 over a year earlier.

In the Soviet Union, cattle numbers on January 1, 1947, were estimated at 41.4 million head, about 1.3 million below the 1931-40 average. Recovery from heavy wartime losses appear to be somewhat retarded by limited breeding stock and by reduced feed and pasture, resulting from last summer's drought, particularly in the southern part of that country. According to the 5-year plan, the Soviet Union has set a goal for cattle numbers in 1950 at 39 percent above the 1945 level.

Although cattle numbers in Africa are believed to have declined considerably in 1946, they are still about 10 percent higher than the 1931-40 average. In 1945, a large decrease in cattle numbers occurred in French Morocco, but increases were reported in Madagascar and Southern Rhodesia. Cattle numbers in the Union of South Africa for 1946 are believed to have been maintained at 1944 and 1945 levels, about 18 percent above the 1931-40 average. Cattle prospects last fall were very encouraging because of plenty of winter forage and spring rains, indicating possibility of early grazing.

Cattle numbers for Asia in 1946 are indicated as being considerably higher than in 1945, and now approaching the 1944 level. A moderate increase occurred in the Near East (Asia Minor) area during the year. In Japan and Formosa, cattle numbers declined, but Netherlands Indies and Philippine Islands showed substantial increases.

Cattle numbers in South American countries are believed to have increased almost one million head in 1946 over the previous year of 1945. Brazilian

cattle numbers in 1946 are believed to have been maintained at 1944 and 1945 levels, or very near the 1931-40 average. Pasture conditions were reported as good during the 1946 dry season (July-November) and that both protein feeds and grains were being fed profitably by dairymen in many regions. It is generally estimated that cattle numbers are increasing, but difficulties in transportation are such that no perceptible change has occurred in the market situation.

Cattle numbers in Argentina, as of July 1946, were estimated to be somewhat smaller than the year previous, but more than 4 percent higher than the 1931-40 average. Frigorifico strikes during the latter part of the year and uncertainty over the prices that were to be paid frigorificos have prevented a strong revival in cattle breeding and fattening. However, with more favorable pasture outlook and considerable strengthening of prices for both feed and particularly breeding animals during the past months, it is believed that expanded cattle operations are a definite possibility in 1947.

Cattle numbers in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela, are being maintained very near the 1945 level, with only Chile and Uruguay being below 1931-40 average.

Cattle numbers in Australia on March 31, 1946, had declined almost 2 percent from a year previous, but are still almost 7 percent above the 1931-40 average. Although dairy cattle are less than one-third of total cattle numbers, they represent three-fourths of the decrease which occurred during the year. The continuation of drought conditions through much of the cattle country in 1946 seriously affected pasture conditions and water supplies, resulting in cattle losses. At the end of January 1946, New Zealand cattle numbers reflected an increase of more than 1.6 percent over a year earlier. Slaughter of beef type cattle was considerably reduced in 1945-46 with no indications of lower numbers on farms, leaving in all probability a high potential number on farms. On the other hand, dairy cows in milk decreased almost 1 percent. Total cattle numbers are still more than 8 percent above the 1931-40 average. The growing season during the latter part of the year has been better than a year ago, and given normal conditions for the remainder of the season, pastures should surpass last year.

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production, approved by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations Committee on Foreign Crops and Livestock Statistics. For this report the committee was composed of Joseph A. Becker, Chairman, C. M. Purves, Elmer A. Reese, Hazel B. Kefauver, Raymond T. Moyer, Lois B. Bacon, and Kathryn H. Wylie.

